

PARENTS FIGHT
FOR CHILDREN WITH
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

By Jane Birks

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Here-in lies an unrecorded chapter in the history of human services in the state of Minnesota. It is a story about the parents who were pioneers in the field of mental retardation and who, under the auspices of the Minnesota Association for Retarded Children, joined with community agencies and public officials to build a better world for people with developmental disabilities.** It is a story of far-reaching consequences.

In c. 1955, the Minnesota ARC was established as a private, nonprofit corporation that functioned as an umbrella organization for its state's local chapters. The chapters, governed by a board of directors, consisted of an unsophisticated but determined group of parents who believed that for people with mental retardation a decent life was a right not a privilege.

In the early years, as the parents desperately sought help for their children, the community remained apathetic in spite of the fact that three percent of the population were affected by this condition. Too often, children with developmental disabilities were considered hopelessly incompetent. They were quickly sent "out of sight" to spend their lives in large, understaffed, state institutions called hospitals. For those remaining at home there was little to enrich their day. Lacking opportunities for education and training, unable to make friends, often ignored by embarrassed siblings, constantly the butt of neighborhood jokes, they lived with little hope. Parents looking for services found none available. Professionals could offer only custodial care in overcrowded foster homes and large community facilities. Doctors recommended state hospitals.

For the pioneers** who laid the foundations of the ARC movement in the 1950s, there were many frustrating moments. It was the

* Jane (Donnelly) Birks

** Mental Retardation, Cerebral Palsy, Autism, Epilepsy, Downs Syndrome, and Childhood Schizophrenia.

*** Ruben Lindh, Roz and John Holahan, Dorothy and Melvin Heckt,

start of an uphill battle that progressed gingerly at first, with small scale fund raising and recreational events; then gathered momentum and with the second wave of parents in 1960 began to emerge as a significant force.

The following narrative will focus on the years from 1960 through 1975, a time of rapid growth for the ARC. Its exciting progress foreshadowed events that would change the social service system in Minnesota.

In 1960, Min Arc's forward-looking Executive Director, Gerald (Jerry) Walsh, and the Director of the Minnesota Department of Mental Health, Doctor David Vail, visited the Scandinavian countries. They returned convinced that Minnesota should use Sweden and Denmark as models for future policy making. With this guide line in mind, the ARC called attention to its urgent needs by advocating a network of services that would allow the majority of children with mental retardation to remain at home. For those already residing in Minnesota's large residential facilities and state hospitals, they sought to eliminate custodial care. Instead, they hoped to initiate treatment programs to prepare patients to live in community group homes closer to their families.

Especially important for achieving these goals was the establishment of the ARC's Governmental Affairs Committees. Charged with mapping out a plan of action, the members solicited other parents to launch an all-out campaign to soften public attitudes and light fires under government bureaucrats and legislators.

The plan consisted of several components: information specialists who worked directly with the legislature, CALL FOR ACTION directives containing well-documented legislative information, and telephone networks which would spin a large web throughout the state by operating on the same principle as chain letters. (By 1963, the network would urge four thousand parents in over sixty chapters to contact their lawmakers.)

* (continued from page 1.) Mary Ann and Howard Huelster, Margaret and Franklin Smith, Verna Johnson, Letha Patteron, Raymond Doyle, Mary Hinze, Ann and Richard Fergeson, Kenneth and Pat Spears, Jane and Jim Frank, Janet and Cyrus Turbis, Arthur and June Bennett, Karlyn and John Cross, Margaret Williams, Tony Lippert, Elizabeth Hubbard, Lyle McGladrey, Bob Lockwood, Bob Anderson, Maurice Mischke and many others.

Once these strategies were in place, new fronts of activity evolved. Speakers were trained on the ARC's policy recommendations in order to enlist the help of civic leaders and service groups. Parents learned how to work with city, county, and state officials, and education and welfare departments. They became members of such important groups as the Minnesota Advisory Committee on Mental Retardation and the Minnesota Mental Retardation Planning Council.

Concurrently, Jerry Walsh and Saint Paul's executive director Betty Hubbard* conducted day to day office business and actively promoted a governmental affairs agenda at the capitol. Their leadership included coordinating and participating in the lobbying effort along with using their exceptional talents to guide, support and build confidence in the volunteers.

Molly Woehrlin, the out-state G.A. organizer from Northfield, Sally Swallen from Minneapolis, and Jane Donnelly from Saint Paul,** among many others, were the recipients of their mentoring. Molly whose daughter, Helen, was mildly retarded and lived at home, commuted from Northfield, Minnesota to the Min ARC office. Telephoning well into the night, she delegated to out-state volunteers letter and telegram assignments to be sent to legislators. Sally, the mother of two sons, Matthew and Peter, both severely retarded and living at home, and Jane, the mother of a son, David, who was retarded/autistic and in residential placement, covered the metropolitan area. They became a tailor-made team for the mission at hand. All three information specialists made public presentations throughout the state and lobbied at the state capitol.

An article by Alice Lake in the 1966 November issue of Redbook Magazine depicts the reasons for their involvement in the ARC: Molly and her husband, Bill, a professor at Carleton College, "took pride in the state's reputation as a leader in social welfare." They enrolled their daughter, Helen, in a special class for educable children and were "quickly disillusioned." When it came to the retarded, Molly found that "Minnesota had fallen far behind."

Because of Jane's son David's aberrant behavior, she and her

* These two professionals were the strongest advocates for MR in the state of Minnesota.

** Molly and Jane were officers of the executive committee of the Min ARC Board of Directors as well as their local boards.

husband, attorney David Donnelly Sr., made the painful decision to place him in foster care at the age of four. But after numerous unsuccessful living situations where he lost weight and his ability to speak, there was nowhere to send him except to the Cambridge State School and Hospital where he lived on a ward with sixty little boys and only two staff. "David was bruised and dirty. When he came home for weekends, he smelled."

Sally and her husband, Doctor Thomas Swallen, a member of Min ARC'S board of directors, "knowing the conditions" at Faribault, Cambridge, and Brainerd, Minnesota's institutions for MR, "refused to give up Matthew and Peter." The boys attended day activity centers which were authorized by the Minnesota legislature in 1961, but "residential placement was inevitable." Faribault, the state hospital that would serve the Swallen's, "ranked next to the bottom among institutions in seven Midwestern states." Many ARC parents had similar experiences and because of this they "learned to be aggressive for their children and for others too."

From the beginning, the 1960's biennial legislative sessions were eventful. The three determined mothers learned their jobs in a hurry. In 1961, Jane Donnelly testified before the senate Health and Welfare committee. Since she was too nervous to stand, the chairman, Senator Walter Franz allowed her to remain seated as she presented the ARC program:

"Mr. Chairman and members of the committee," she began.

"We are here today to highlight the Minnesota Association for Retarded Children's legislative recommendations. We encourage the state of Minnesota to take responsibility for its 100,000 people who are mentally retarded and deserve the right to live a life of dignity. For there is no other such serious condition, that begins at birth, affects so many people and lasts a lifetime. Keeping this in mind the ARC recommends the following:"

- 1--1500 new staff positions for the state hospitals.
- 2--Elimination of the hospital's 25% over-crowding.
- 3--Renovation or demolition of institutional buildings that are unsafe or run down.
- 4--\$36,000 in matching funds for Daytime Activity Centers, (for children and adults with IQ's below thirty-five.)
- 5--Trainable education classes made mandatory, (for children and adults with IQ's between thirty-five and fifty)
- 6--Support for sheltered work.

Her presentation was received by members of the welfare committee with downcast eyes. The subject was not a popular one. The ARC would soon find out that mental retardation would be given even less attention in the finance and appropriation committees. Consequently, the results of the 1961 legislative session were minimal at best. MR received the small amount requested for day activity centers, but the institutions did only slightly better than in 1959. No meaningful education legislation was passed. Sheltered work was ignored.

But the ARC membership was not discouraged, and Sally Swallen and Jane Donnelly had gained valuable experience. Although at times, it seemed like nobody was listening, in the hearts of the parents the pull of their children's condition was stronger than the force of despair.

In 1963, the mothers, besides testifying in front of numerous committees, pursued audiences with important legislators. Jerry Walsh and Betty Hubbard provided backup and direction as needed. The G.A. committees made sure the mail piled high on the lawmaker's desks. For legislators to receive huge amounts of daily correspondence may be routine today but in the 1960s, it was a phenomenon. During one session, the senate, after a deluge of telegrams from parents urging increased allocations for the state hospitals, voted to stop the delivery of these messages to the senate floor. The rule still applies.

After Molly Woehrlin joined Jane and Sally at the capitol, the women became known as "Jerry Walsh's harem."* Together, they found authors for bills, prepared the bills to be processed at the registrar's office, and gathered the legislative support necessary for their passage. They roamed the marble floored hallways and the offices crammed full of old, oak desks, giving out information and pressing for votes. Such occupations were far from commonplace for women, let alone parent volunteers. They became friends of the secretaries** who gave them access to telephones, committee meetings, and lawmaker's whereabouts- The lobbyists waited outside the conference rooms or at the coffee stand on the rotunda's balcony where visitors bought coffee and rolls and laughed

* A humorously acceptable remark in the 1960s ** They were especially grateful to Buelah, Senator Franz's secretary, for letting them hang their coats in the senator's office rather than in the sub-basement where scarfs and gloves might be missing at the end of the day.

about the day-before-gum stuck under the counter. From these stake-outs they cornered their prey when the meetings were over. Timing was of the utmost importance. The women held off their approach if the lawmaker seemed too busy. But in the end, they made sure to get an audience. If necessary, they stalked the legislators on to the house and senate floors, a practice that the Rules Committee eventually forbade. Years later, a senator told Sally that she and Jane Donnelly were the reason the doors to the house and senate chamber's were closed to lobbyists.

With each new legislative session, the three women's confidence grew. They learned to keep the ARC's mission in focus, to be a reliable clearing house for statistics and surveys, to think big, to make connections, to never argue and to always tell the truth. If asked a question they couldn't answer, they'd respond by saying, "I don't know, but I'll find out." They always did. Experience taught the triumvirate that the most effective way to hasten those in power to shed their cloaks of disinterest was to gain the trust of the people with whom they dealt.

Working with Karl F. Rolvaag, who was elected governor from 1962-1966, was a case in point. After hearing the ARC'S desperate plea for help, his office and the ARC organized legislative tours of the state hospitals. He declared the lack of staff in the institutions as "Absolutely deplorable," and appointed Sally Luther, as his Special Advisor on MR. She never failed to keep the governor focused on the ARC mission and made her office easily accessible to the lobbyists.

Karl Rolvaag was the first governor in the country to make the plight of people with mental retardation a major priority.

In c.1963, Vivian Parks, the President of the Dome Club, a women's auxiliary for senator's wives, accepted the ARC's invitation for a tour of the Faribault and Cambridge state institutions. On the bus, Sally and Jane told how the legislative building committee only focused on the least expensive repairs at the hospitals' physical plants. The wards with their horrors of human neglect were totally ignored. The two mothers explained that funding requests for staff, programs and buildings must all be met. The senator's wives quickly understood. They were appalled by what they saw: unsanitary buildings, where food was transferred through dimly lit, water-dripping tunnels to barn like wards; crying babies in cribs with soiled diapers and bed linen, patients prancing back and forth with nothing to do, their hurts and sores

oozing, their clothes dirty and no staff in sight. Min ARC president, Melvin Heckt, had likened the institutions to "pigsties." The women of the Dome Club agreed. Several became nauseated and discontinued the tour. One was quoted as saying, "The wards were so depressing I covered my eyes. My husband will hear about this."

Other important coordinating efforts of the ARC included its association with the Commissioner of Minnesota's Department of Public Welfare (DPW), Morris Hursh; the Commissioner of Vocational Rehabilitation, (DVR), Gus Gerke; and the Director of Special Education, John Groos. For years the departments had struggled unsuccessfully to focus public attention on the problems of mental retardation. Now the clear voice of the ARC created an awareness of the issue. Although standoffish at first, the commissioners soon embraced their stroke of good fortune.

Furthermore, encouraged by Min ARC, the governor issued directives to the Minnesota Department of Public Welfare to appoint a director of MR services, Ardo Wrobel. Many people confused the (impaired IQ) condition of mental retardation with the disease of mental illness. Furthermore, MR had low visibility. This in-house move successfully separated the two, providing the community with a better understanding of the condition and giving MR the high profile it deserved.

When overnight seminars were initiated at Min ARC'S Camp Friendship in Annandale, Minnesota, these professionals attended along with the superintendents of the state hospitals and staff from the governor's office. Together, with the parents, they planned for the upcoming legislative session. As the different groups polished their cooperative skills, a continuous dialogue developed. And although each faction zealously protected it's autonomy, from then on, the ARC testified at legislative hearings with the state department heads and the governor's special advisor on mental retardation. Such a close working relationship between the government and a non-profit agency was a new concept in Minnesota. And the caring professionals were generous in their praise, acknowledging that "without the parents the state wouldn't move an inch."

On the national scene interest in mental retardation was also expanding. In 1961, Eunice Shiver, encouraged her brother, President John Kennedy, to make an appearance at the National Association for Retarded Children's Annual Meeting at the

Mayflower Hotel in Washington D.C. In its elegant dining room, tables of eight were assembled. Jerry Walsh, Betty Hubbard, Jane Donnelly and John Hollahan, delegates from Min ARC. were joined for lunch by Senators Eugene McCarthy and Hubert Humphrey. The ARC members were encouraged by the senator's offers of support and the president's announcement of a National Panel on Mental Retardation. This effort along with a week long television series on the "Today" show and the film "A Child is Waiting," starring Burt Lancaster, increased mental retardation's visibility on both the national and local levels. Bill Diehl, film critic for the Saint Paul Dispatch, gave the movie a thumbs down review. He suggested it was stupidity to spend money on the retarded, "in the hope that they'll one day be able to wash dishes and tie strings around bundles." Referring to the film's "too close a look" at the retarded as SHOCKING, he nevertheless, graciously printed Jane Donnelly's letter disagreeing with his point of view. The sympathetic response supporting the ARC's position contributed to the gradual demise of community apathy.

About this time, Sam Newland, a young journalist for the Minneapolis Tribune, decided to make mental retardation his beat. Committed to bringing MR out of the closet, his reporting exposed the lack of community services and the ghastly conditions in the state hospitals. At one point, the ARC waited until the superintendent of Fairbault was in the Twin Cities to make sure that Newland got into the institution's most neglected wards. His expose hit the front pages and challenged the public's complacency. Robert O'Keeff covered the legislative news for the Saint Paul paper.

In 1965, the ARC lobbyists and their colleagues were unhappy with the token improvements allocated by the 1963 legislature. The biennium's operating budget for the state institution's 6000 patients with MR increased just 12%. This small sum was partially depleted when used to eliminate a 5% economy measure that was already in effect. The 7% that remained was further reduced by the increased daily maintenance costs. Little money was leftover for additional staff. The governor who had requested almost 700 new hospital positions was stunned to find only 160 could be filled. For example, the Cambridge State Hospital with 1500 patients recieved only twelve new staff positions. It was a disgrace.

Since the legislators insisted there was nothing more they could do, Jane suggested that the ARC try something new: circulate a petition throughout the state which would read "I

will pay taxes to help mentally retarded people."

The Saint Paul ARC organized its membership and with the cooperation of other ARCs, a scroll with almost 2000 signatures was pasted together. Senator Nicholas Coleman, who later become majority leader of the senate, proposed throwing the scroll over the second floor balcony to the rotunda below. He and three other Ramsey county lawmakers joined Jane for the event. Sally Swallen waited below to lead the rolling signatures out the front door and down the capitol steps. Along the way, she adroitly avoided a rush of legislators thrusting themselves in front of the cameras. For the first time, both Twin City newspapers gave the ARC front page coverage, and all the TV and radio stations broadcasted the event.

As parents became more aware of the importance of a good MR public relations program, Jane and Sally appeared on the local radio, late-night talk shows. They also spoke to senior medical students at the University of Minnesota. Molly, Jane, Sally and others took turns flying with Governor Rolvaag to barnstorm the state with legislative information. Members from the ARC's Minneapolis and Saint Paul's speaker's bureaus arranged coffee parties where slide shows were shown to metropolitan civic groups. Min ARC's documentary on the institutions was scheduled throughout the state. Telephone calls, letters, and telegrams from local constituents continued to bombard the legislators. On capitol hill, the mothers kept pushing and the results were extraordinary. The 1965 legislature voted an extra two million dollars for people with mental retardation. This was enough to fund 421 new staff positions at the state institutions, to enlarge the day activity centers, to assure more state aid for teachers, and to provide some funding for the sheltered workshops. With this unprecedented turn of events, people who had for years been hidden at home, appeared out of nowhere. A light flickered on societies dark corner of neglect.

Yet it was only the beginning. In 1967, the ARC theme, "Minnesota on the March," was launched, and the promotion of "A Day at the Legislature," became an annual event. People doing business on the Hill took notice as scores of parents from Minnesota's eighty-seven counties filled the halls of the capitol. They attended a morning orientation period and a Health and Welfare committee hearing. At noon they lunched with their legislators at the near by Holiday Inn. Upon returning home, the parents wrote the senators and representatives thanking them for their declarations of support.

Later that session, on Saint Patrick's Day, the three women lobbyists took to "the wearing of the green." From then on they coordinated the colors of their clothes and were easily recognizeable as the "retarded ladies." It was a splendid ploy. The competition had become intense because other organizations, noticing the "ladies" success, inundated the capitol with female lobbyists. By enhancing the ARC'S profile, however, the women's individual identities were occasionally blurred--people called Molly, Sally; or Sally, Jane; or Jane, Molly. The three lobbyists quickly learned to answer for each other.

The ARC continued to press hard on all fronts during the 1967 legislative session. The state institutions were allocated another 404 new staff positions, with more to come in the future. This, along with the alleviation of overcrowded wards, finally allowed the hospitals to train residents for returning to the community. The same year, Minnesota's sixty-four day activity centers recieved \$900,000 in matching funds, more than doubling the 1965 appropriation of \$425,000.

Still, waiting lists were long. In c. 1969, over 10,000 of those eligible for special education classes were not receiving the training they were entitled to by law. It was also estimated that 3400 people with MR could benefit from sheltered work. Of the eleven workshops in the state, the largest were the Opportunity Workshop in Minneapolis and the Occupational Training Center* in Saint Paul. OTC, was founded in 1964 by John DuRand. He was a dedicated, young man of vision and imagination. With a budget of \$2000 and only a few clients, the workshop eventually became a \$6,000,000 business which employed hundreds of workers each year. With this thriving enterprise at the capitol's back door, and Jane on its board of directors, the Saint Paul ARC arranged workshop tours for important legislators, as did the Minneapolis ARC for The Opportunity Workshop. Concurrently, the Minnesota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation asked the ARC to hold training sessions where Jane and Molly helped edit the text and develop visual aids for DVR's legislative presentations.

By 1970, with the downsizing of the state hospitals making headway, the "big push" now turned to the continued expansion of community opportunities and the establishment of a network of small group homes. At the forefront, a philosophy of "Normalization" was pursued. This concept recognized that

* Later OTC's name was changed to Minnesota Diversified Industries--MDI.

all people with disabilities should have the chance to live as normal a life as possible. Acceptance of this principle paved the way for the integration of group homes in neighborhood settings; for making trainable education classes mandatory,* for job placement of working age adults in real work situations, and for the inclusion of people with mental retardation in society's everyday activities.

ARC members were both ideologues and pragmatists and pursued the principle of "Normalization" with such a unified voice, that the most skeptical audiences now listened. From the small town coffee klatch to the governor's office, mental retardation invaded the conversation. The days of hiding people with developmental disabilities were over.

Still much remained to be done and changes were always taking place. The time came when Sally was unable to be at the legislature, but Molly was there often, tracking down out-state legislators, and Jane lobbied on a daily basis.

Beginning in c. 1971, Molly and Jane became involved with the Minnesota Committee for the Handicapped which was designed to coordinate the needs of newly established disability groups concerned with Autism, Epilepsy, Cerebral Palsy, and Downs Syndrome.** These groups had not been organized but were automatically included in the ARC'S efforts. This extended band of activists, The Lunch Bunch, met weekly to discuss strategies and exchange information in the capitol's basement cafeteria--nicknamed, The Dungeon. While the ARC promoted the collective, legislative mission, some questioned their judgement in spreading themselves so thin. Nevertheless, solid cooperation prevailed and the all-encompassing consortium of players marched forward but perhaps at a slower pace.

During this period of activity, the legislature's biennial sessions became annual sessions, and some in-house adjustments took place. In order to alleviate the over-crowding at the capitol, extra offices were opened in the State Office Building. Since the Democrats were in power, Republicans were

* Minnesota's trainable education bill was passed in 1971 and implemented in 1972. Mandatory classis for educable children had been in effect since 1957.

** Funding for these handicapping conditions was made available under the federal Developmental Disabilities Act--DD. c. 1970

forced to walk through long tunnels to these new, inconvenient spaces, and a list of Republican lawmakers was circulated with the address "S.O.B." following each name. Putting the humor of the situation aside, it was a nuisance for the ARC having the conservative legislators so far away from the house and senate chambers. Furthermore, the Rules Committee made the offices less accessible by insisting that lobbyists wait in a front anteroom before making appointments with the secretaries.

After a decade* of MR public relations, another notable change occurred--a few freshman legislators were ALREADY committed to the ARC when they arrived on the hill and joined the incumbents friendly to the cause. Collectively, they included such luminary politicians as Representatives Duxbury, Smaby, Faricy, Long, Sabo, Barr, Norton, Flakne, and Senators, Holmquist, Franz, Childs, Perpich, Dosland, O'Neill, Huse, Coleman, Anderson, McClutchen and others. The word "friendly," however, is used advisedly. For there were those whose motives were suspect. For example, one articulate and ambitious, out-state senator wouldn't give the ARC the time of day until he decided to run for governor. That year he authored several MR bills. He was not alone, there were others coming up for election who were scrambling to get on the bandwagon. By 1973, it had become politically correct to support this serious social issue--the lawmakers needed the ARC as much as the ARC needed them.

There were, also, a core of legislators who should be remembered for supporting the parents from the very beginning, who were caring spirits and had the guts to put their popularity on the line. In the early sixties, among others, the out-state Senators Stan Holmquist and Walter Franz, and Representative Cap Fisher were particularly helpful. Early on, Saint Paul Representative Peter Popovich, hosted a dinner at the University Club for the Ramsey delegation and invited Jane to present the ARC legislative program. Her friend, Representative Bill O'Brien found matching funds for the first east metropolitan DAC, and Representative Douglas Head from Hennepin County advocated for the rights of the mentally retarded before and after his career escalated from state representative to Attorney General. Lieutenant Governor, Rudy Perpich's, interest in MR. became apparent when he proposed a swimming pool for the Brainerd State Hospital. Although a creative idea, there were so many more important needs that the bill was tabled. It did, however, endear the lieutenant

* (1960-1970)

governor to his constituents and awaken the ARC to his support.

If there were a legislative "power center" in the late sixties to the middle seventies, it was in Ramsey County where, under the leadership of the majority leader of the senate, Nick Coleman, the ARC forged ahead. It was a lucky happenstance that the senator along with the house appropriations committee chairman, Representative Fred Norton, were from Jane's 7th Ward. And it didn't hurt that other Ramsey County lawmakers such as Ray Faricy, Joseph O'Neill, Bruce Vento, and Jerry Huse were powerful members of the committees on education and welfare. But it was Senator Coleman, more than any person in the legislature who was responsible for the ARC's success. When Nick was the chief author of an ARC bill, it was certain to pass the senate. He was always accessible. He toured the state institutions regularly with Molly, Jane, Sally, and others. With Jane and the chairman of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Institutions, Senator George Perpich, in tow, he made extra trips to Cambridge, the hospital that served his constituency in Ramsey County.

In c. 1973, when a bill giving equal rights to homosexuals, women, and the handicapped* seemed doomed for failure, Betty Hubbard telephoned Jane to get up to the capitol immediately. Still in her tennis dress at seven in the evening, she searched the capitol for Senator Coleman. When she found him behind a pillar in the hallway, he escorted her past the Sargent-at-Arms into the senate chambers** and pulled the bill in question from under a stack of papers: "Get up in the gallery," he said. At two minutes before midnight, with but a few weary spectators left in their seats, the senator announced senate file number such and such. He allowed no time for discussion. The roll was called, the bill was passed, the clock was covered and the 1973 session was over.*** Social change had once again become a reality.

Among the numerous members of the "well-prepped," Ramsey county delegation on the Health and Welfare Committees, was the future governor of Minnesota, Senator Wendell Anderson. Jane, after the senate had adjourned for the day, occasionally gave Senator Anderson a ride to his office in the First National

* A similiar law was passed in the U.S. Congress in 1973.

** The situation was unusual because lobbyists were not allowed on the senate floor, much less a woman in tennis garb.

*** Some might call it railroading.

Bank of Saint Paul. He voted consistently for MR programs. But years later, when the parents complained to the press about the then Governor Anderson's lack of interest in legislation for group homes, the governor in his splendid, executive office reprimanded his friend and her colleague, Molly. As he sat at his desk with the Minnesota and U.S. flags behind him and several staff at his side, the ARC members were stunned to see him lose his cool. When Jane, the spokesperson, thanked him for his support of the special education bill, he jumped to his feet, pointed his finger in her face, and screamed, "Why didn't you tell THAT to the press?!" He went on in this vein at length. Eventually Molly received some of the same. The women were not intimidated by the episode, but the governor's staff were full of apologies. Temper tantrum aside, Wendell Anderson should be remembered as a supporter of the ARC.

In 1975, besides the parent's ongoing concerns for the downsizing of state hospitals and the development of community facilities, the ARC initiated two special education bills: Early Childhood Intervention* and the Birk's bill--TMR-25. After the passage of the 1971 mandatory education law, there were still some children who had no way of making up the years of schooling they had missed. TMR-25, allowed them to attend classes until they were twenty-five years old. It was enacted into law for the eight year period that was necessary to complete its mission. Other states followed Minnesota's lead and eventually a similar bill was included in the United States' Department of Education's congressional package.

Following the fifteen years of legislative changes highlighted in this account, the ARC continued to speak out. Institutions were closed and more services were funded. Young ARC parents, like those in the past, continued to chart new territories of inclusion that enriched not only the lives of their children, but also their own lives and those of the community.

Molly's daughter, Helen, graduated from the Northfield public schools. She lives independently in Minneapolis where she is employed as a stock manager in a bridal shop** and has an active social life at her church. Sally's son, Matthew, died tragically in a swimming pool accident at the age of twenty-

* The Minnesota Committee for the Handicapped, the ARC and the Minnesota Department of Education promoted the bill, and it was enacted into law the following session.

** Rush's Bridal Shop

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three. Her son Peter, resides in a residential home* and attends The Adult Training and Habilitation Center in Carver County. Jane's son David, after eleven unsuccessful placements, including eight years in the Cambridge State Hospital, lives in a group home.** He attended TMR-25 classes and is now employed at the Merrick Companies, Inc. in Saint Paul*** where he repairs headphones for Northwest Airlines.

All three individuals: Helen Woehrlin, Peter Swallen, and David Donnelly Jr. lead active, happy lives.

* Mount Olivet Rolling Acres

*• Thomas Allen Company, Inc.

*** A Day Training and Habilitation Center.



Molly Woehrlin and daughter. Helen.



Sally Svallen and sons Peter and Matthew



Jane Donnelly Birks and son. David,